

MONTEREY BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Conservation Working Group

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17, 1997

Conservation Working Group (CWG) members in attendance were: Rachel Saunders, Chair (Center for Marine Conservation); Jack Wickham (Sierra Club-Ventana Chapter); Ellen Farout-Daniels (Friends of the Sea Otter); Donna Meyers (Coastal Watershed Council); Vicki Nichols (Save Our Shores); and Joanne Flanders, Patrick Cotter, and Lisa Ziobro (Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary).

I. CWG Administration

A. There were no comments on the previous meeting minutes.

B. The Research Activity Panel (RAP) has scheduled a barbecue and tour of the Oiled Wildlife Center with all working groups following its August 8, 1997 meeting at Long Marine Laboratory. The schedule is as follows: 9:00 AM - Noon, RAP meeting; Noon - 1:00 PM, Barbecue; 1:00 PM, Tour of Oiled Wildlife Center, Long Marine Laboratory.

C. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for July 15, 1997 from 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM at the Moss Landing Harbor District Office. CWG members will welcome Carol Fairfield and provide presentations that include issues of concern (see IV.). Each member will present for fifteen minutes and will bring one-page handouts.

D. General Announcements:

- Save Our Shores (SOS) will be holding the Oil Doc Walkers/Oil Pad Program training session on June 26, 1997, 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM, at Moss Landing. Contact Susan Hiestand at SOS at 462-5660.
- Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) is conducting a seminar on beached pinnipeds on June 18, 1997 at noon.
- The Coastal Watershed Council (CWC) is holding an Urban Watch/Stormdrain Monitors one-day training session on June 28, 1997, at 801 Lighthouse Avenue Conference Room in Monterey. Contact Donna Meyers at CWC at 426-1092.
- The Third Annual SOS Summer Sampling fundraising event will be on Saturday, June 21, 1997, at Wilder Ranch.
- Lisa Ziobro is the new MBNMS Advisory Council Coordinator.

II. MBNMS Office Report

Joanne Flanders gave the MBNMS office report. Highlights are contained in the attached MBNMS Monthly Activity Report for May 1997. The following items were not included in the written report:

- The draft proposed rule for jade collection in MBNMS was released to the public on June 13, 1997. A public hearing is tentatively planned for July 30 at 7:00 PM in Gorda, Big Sur.
- The Monterey Bay Kelp Harvesting Cooperative is requesting assistance in locating a local kelp specialist.
- A pull-out forum on salmon/sea lion interactions is planned for the upcoming National meeting of the American Fisheries Society in Monterey. The forum is scheduled for the evening of August 28, 1997 at 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM. The MBNMS and NMFS are signed on as official sponsors of the event. Please contact Vicki Nichols with any ideas for her presentation at the Forum.

Discussion ensued regarding the issue of dredging practices in Santa Cruz Harbor. Patrick Cotter summarized the Sanctuary's role in this issue by explaining that staff is assisting the Santa Cruz Port Director with research into historical practices of dredging in Santa Cruz Harbor. Vicki Nichols announced a special meeting on this issue at the Santa Cruz Harbor Community Room on June 24 at 7:00 PM.

III. Fort Ord Wetlands Restoration and Water Quality Update

Patrick Cotter provided a presentation on the four discharge pipes located on Fort Ord's pristine beaches. Currently, the pipes are functioning as storm drains which drain the entire lower Fort Ord area, however, prior to 1989 the pipes discharged sewage. Today the pipes are in disrepair and the supportive beach cliffs are eroding. As a result, the State Parks Commission considers the pipes to be a public hazard.

The Fort Ord Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) has requested that the U.S. Army provide a feasibility plan to remove the stormwater pipes and to make better use of the stormwater by constructing a wetland area.

The attached RAB Resolution has been passed on to the U.S. Army for action. At this time, the U.S. Army is developing responses and has given a preliminary thumbs down. Rachel Saunders suggested that CWG members send a letter on behalf of their organizations supporting the attached resolution and send a copy to the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC) for consideration a future SAC meeting agenda item. Rachel Saunders proposed that she write the support letter and pass it around for signatures.

IV. Discussion: CWG Topics/Issues to Bring to the Attention of new MBNMS Superintendent

The CWG came up with the following topics to present to Carol Fairfield at the next CWG meeting:

- Sea Otter Declines: Ellen Farout-Daniels from Friends of the Sea Otter raised concerns about sea otter health issues related to water quality and pollutant transport, parasites, bacteria, and fungus. She would like to see a research program to sort out the agents and to have the MBNMS participate; she would like to see Sanctuary representation at upcoming fall meetings regarding this issue.
- Kelp Harvesting: There are outstanding issues regarding enforcement, monitoring and regulation. Are there future possibilities of Sanctuary

action regarding regulation of kelp harvesting?

- Marine Reserves: Are there future possibilities for the establishment of marine reserves within the Sanctuary?
- MBNMS 5-Year Review Process: How do we plan to review ourselves (SAC and working groups) and what do we want to do next. CWG expressed interest in an impartial review of the SAC and working groups, and the Sanctuary management plan.
- Sanctuary's Role in Emergency Response Plans
- MBNMS Public Image: MBNMS needs to be more proactive. The CWG suggests establishing partnerships with the community and other conservation organizations.
- MBNMS Contract Employees and Consistency Concerns
- Northern Boundary Issues and the Role of the Task Force
- Man-made Noise

It was proposed that at the July 15, 1997 CWG meeting, members will welcome Carol Fairfield, the new Sanctuary Superintendent, and provide presentations that include the above issues. Each member will present for fifteen minutes and will bring one-page handouts describing their organizations, issues, and what they can offer.

V. Spring Sea Otter Census Results

Ellen Faurot-Daniels presented the Spring Sea Otter Census results. Please see attachment. The sea otter population has continued to decline for the third consecutive year. The carcass count is high and there does not appear to be a single source for the high mortalities. However, necropsies performed by the National Wildlife Service have shown that sea otter mortality from infectious disease is occurring in 40% of the necropsies. One parasite is showing up in an increased number of otters and is acting differently; San Joaquin Fever, a fungal infection, is also showing up in the necropsies. There is a need for funding for increased necropsies, since only 25 percent of sea otter mortalities are currently necropsied.

Sea otters are unique from its other family members in that they can carry a much higher load of contaminants. There is concern that this is compromising these animals indirectly or in combination with parasites. The continued decline of the sea otter population doesn't appear to be related to in-breeding, low food sources, or genetic problems.

VI. Issue Updates

- Pinniped/Fisheries Forum: Vicki Nichols is waiting for flyers and other materials from The Fishermen's Alliance. If CWG members know of anyone interested in participating in the Forum discussions, please forward their names to Vicki Nichols for special invitations.
- The Pacific Grove City Council will not take action on the Proposed Ricketts Underwater Park at its June meeting.
- The California Fish and Game Commission decided against any action regarding kelp harvesting.
- Jack Wickham asked that MBNMS express an interest in gathering further information on man-made noise.

VII. Future Agenda Items

- WQPP teacher training curriculum and hands-on exercises demonstrating transport of pollutants into Sanctuary watersheds;
- Jade Cove Update - Presentation on marine mammal/salmon interactions;
- Presentation on Beach COMBERS Program by Scott Benson;
- Low level flight;

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Ziobro
MBNMS Advisory Council Coordinator

enc.: MBNMS Monthly Activity Report for May 1997
 Fort Ord Restoration Advisory Board Resolution
 Friends of the Sea Otter June 13, 1997 News Release

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